

ADOSH ADVOCATE

Improving Workplace Safety and Health



<http://www.ica.state.az.us>

Darin Perkins, Director

Fall 2003

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Contributing Staff: Darin Perkins, Pat Ryan,
Ernie Miller, Mark Norton, Joe Gates

Kenneth P. Gaut: Design and Layout
gaut.ken@dol.gov

Comments and suggestions are welcome

Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health
800 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ. 85007
(602) 542-5795

2675 East Broadway Road
Tucson, AZ. 85716
(520) 628-5478

A Supervisor's Duty

Your job in management places you in a unique position of trust. Individuals who are in an authoritative or supervising position over others are a direct representative of the employer and must apply company policy wisely and fairly. Also entrusted to you is the obligation to safeguard the employees whom you supervise. No responsibility transcends this in importance. On-the-job accidents represent a serious threat to the physical well being of the employees you supervise. Accident prevention calls for your constant vigilance.

Therefore, as you perform your supervisory duties, guiding your employees safely through their daily work activities, be yourself guided by these precepts:

1. You are a supervisor and thus, in a sense, have two families. Care for your people at work as you would care for your family members at home. Be sure each worker you supervise understands and puts into practical use the training and safe work procedures the company provides.
2. Know the rules of safety that apply to the work you oversee. Never let it be said that one of the employees you supervise was injured because you were not aware of the safety precautions required for the work being performed.
3. Anticipate the risks that may arise

from changes in equipment or work procedures. Make use of expert safety advice that is available to help you identify new and predictable hazards and then control or eliminate those hazards to keep your people accident free.

4. Get your employees involved and build a safety culture within your organization. Encourage the employees you supervise to discuss with you the hazards of their work. No job should proceed when a question of safety remains unanswered. When you are receptive to the ideas of your workers, you tap a source of firsthand knowledge that will help you prevent needless loss and suffering.
5. Instruct your employees in the occupational safety and health standards that apply to the work they perform, in company safe work procedures, and in the contents of the operator's manual or manufacturer's recommendations for machines or equipment they operate or use. As a supervisor it is your responsibility to enforce these rules firmly, fairly and consistently to prevent accidents.
6. Follow up to be sure each employee understood the training and instructions you provided. Employees should know and understand that you cannot allow an indi-



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vidual employee to jeopardize his own safety or the safety of coworkers by working in an unsafe manner. **Safety must be enforced with disciplinary action.** Do not fail your employer who has implemented the company safety program and sanctioned the safety policies. Do not fail the employees you supervise who need your firm, fair and consistent guidance.

7. Set a good example. Demonstrate safety in your own work habits and personal conduct.

8. Investigate every accident, however slight, that befalls any of the employees you supervise. Where minor injuries go unheeded, crippling accidents may latter strike.

9. Cooperate fully with those in the company who manage or facilitate the safety program. Their dedicated purpose is to help you keep the employees you supervise fully able and on the job, and to eliminate the heavy personal toll of accidents.

10. REMEMBER, not only does acci-

dent prevention reduce human suffering and loss, from a practical viewpoint, it is no more than good business. Therefore safety is one of your prime obligations.

By developing a safety culture within your organization, by leading your workers in thinking safety, and ensuring they work safely day by day through firm, fair and consistent supervision, you will earn their loyal support and cooperation.

*Joe Gates,
Safety and Health Trainer*

Letter to all HVAC contractors

The following letter was mailed to HVAC contractor associations on December 9, 2002. It has general applicability to all contractor/employees.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH) has jurisdiction over all occupational safety and health matters in Arizona. We conduct unannounced inspections at all types of workplaces and in all industries throughout the state for the purpose of ensuring compliance with state and federal occupational safety and health standards. In addition to our regular, planned inspections, ADOSH also investigates workplace accidents and fatalities. Recently, ADOSH investigated two workplace accidents involving HVAC contractors, one of which resulted in a fatality, that were very similar in nature.

In both incidents, contract employees were conducting maintenance and repair work on air conditioning units located on the roofs of the hiring businesses. In both cases, employees were working in close proximity to skylights that were not covered or otherwise protected to prevent someone from falling through them. In one instance, the 16 year-old son of the employee fell through the skylight to the concrete below. He later died from his injuries. In the second instance, an employee of the contractor fell through the skylight to the concrete below, sustaining critical injuries.

Based upon these and similar incidents, ADOSH believes that there may be a widespread problem of employers failing to protect employees who are exposed to a hazard of falling through skylights. **ADOSH regulations require that employers implement fall protection measures when employees are exposed to falls greater than six feet. Specific regulations require that covers, guardrails, or other protective measures be provided to prevent employees from falling through skylights or similar openings.** As an employer within this industry, it behooves you to be aware of and familiar with these requirements and take the necessary steps to provide adequate fall protection to your employees who may be exposed to similar hazards.

ADOSH is concerned about the safety and health of all employees and we are committed to assist you in your efforts to create the safest working environment possible. If you have questions, please feel free to contact our consultation section at 602-542-1769 in Phoenix, or 520-628-5478 in Tucson.

Sincerely,

Darin Perkins,
Director

Why Me?

Many times when I deal with employers during or following an inspection this question is frequently asked. Why are you inspecting this company? It's a good question and one that deserves an answer. ADOSH has a variety of ways in which inspections are generated. They are typically prioritized in the following order: 1) imminent danger, 2) fatalities or catastrophes, 3) complaints, 4) referrals, and 5) planned inspections.

The term "imminent danger" describes a situation where employees are exposed to a condition so hazardous that it is highly probable that a serious injury or death will occur if immediate action is not taken to correct the situation. There typically is not time to address this type of situation through the normal procedures of filing a complaint, scheduling an inspection, etc. ADOSH responds immediately to reports of such conditions. These situations are placed at the top of the priority list because, unlike a fatality or catastrophe investigation, there is still time to prevent a serious injury or death.

Fatalities and catastrophe inspections are second in priority because, by their very definition, employees have already been seriously injured or killed. ADOSH responds quickly to such incidents in order to identify whether or not there were any violations that lead to the accident and to prevent similar accidents from occurring in the future.

Complaint inspections are initiated when ADOSH receives a complaint from an employee, or an employee representative, alleging serious hazards in the workplace. Complaint inspections make up approximately 15% of the total number of inspections conducted by ADOSH.

Referral inspections are the result of a referral from another agency, medical provider or emergency services provider and make up approximately 2% of all inspections.

Planned inspections make up the largest percentage of inspections (approximately 80%) and can come from a variety of sources. For example, ADOSH utilizes construction Dodge Reports to schedule inspections on construction sites. These reports provide ADOSH with basic information such as the type, size and location of the project, as well as the name of the general contractor. We also utilize a "claims" list to schedule a certain number of planned inspections. This is a listing of all employers in the state that have reported more than a pre-



selected number of injury claims for the previous calendar year. Finally, certain local and national emphasis programs (i.e., falls, excavations, silica) have been established that determine some of ADOSH's planned inspections. When hazards are noted related to these emphasis areas, inspections can be conducted.

Although the reason for an inspection is important, the more important question is whether the employer is prepared for the inspection. When an inspection takes place, it really makes no difference who the complainant was, or what information was on the Dodge Report. Although employers across the

state know that ADOSH can inspect their workplace, many do not think it will happen to them. When it does they are sometimes stunned. Do not wait until that time to implement your safety and health program. By then it is too late and in reality you have probably wasted a lot of money and time, by not having been proactive. I've been involved in many inspections where employers took safety and health just as seriously as all other functions of the company and they did very well in those inspections. Those companies that have a reactive approach do poorly and simply throw out more money due to citations and penalties.

Employers should remember that ADOSH's goal is to keep employees safe to do the job so that the company continues to thrive. Be prepared for an inspection. Have sound safety and health programs and practices, practice consistent enforcement of your policies and procedures and be open to change. The mere fact that something has been done the same way for 30 years does not mean it is safe. Seek assistance from other companies who have demonstrated their commitment to safety and health. Utilize consultation programs offered free of charge through ADOSH and other agencies to identify weaknesses and strengths and get yourself prepared.

Remember you're in business to make money, why throw it away? Take a proactive stance and change the culture within the company and make a commitment to safety.

Mark Norton,
Assistant Director

If you have a question concerning safety and health in the workplace, please feel free to contact our consultation sections at 602-542-1769 in Phoenix, or 520-628-5478 in Tucson.

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Occupational Fatalities Investigated by ADOSH

April 1, 2003 through June 30, 2003

- An employee was crushed by the mast of a drilling rig which collapsed during drilling operations.
- The owner of a company was building a new floor, six inches above the existing floor. Flammable materials were in use and the vapors collected within the six- inch void between the two floors. A spark created by the use of a nail gun ignited the vapors, causing an explosion.
- A company owner was crushed by a falling metal plate during welding operations.
- An employee servicing an evaporative cooler fell through an unprotected skylight, 30 feet to the concrete floor.
- An employee was crushed by an airplane engine when the forklift used to remove the engine tipped forward due to overloading.

Fatal Mistakes

How much weight can one man stabilize, support and keep from tipping over? We don't really know, but when a weight is balanced on edge, one man can hold it up pretty well. However, he is betting his life on perfect balance of a monster that is waiting to hurt him.

A man working with another in a storage area was helping locate and remove one slab of marble from a stack that was stored in a near vertical manner, against an A-frame support. Several slabs were rejected as being the wrong ones, and the employee was holding the rejects in a vertical balanced position, while the man he was helping located and removed the sought after slab. Gravity overcame the employee's critical limit of strength. The stack of slabs, weighing about 1,200 pounds, came down on top of the employee pinning him against a workbench. He received fatal injuries.

In another case one employee was using all the mechanical devices at his disposal to move a 5,000 pound, donut shaped, electronic magnet device from the back of a tractor trailer truck. He had the magnet on edge, on a hydraulic pallet jack, and was pulling the load to the rear of the trailer to remove it. In order to clear some obstructions in the trailer he lowered the load onto some carefully placed wood blocks so he could reposition the heavy pallet jack. He did not block the load from tipping to either side while lowered. The 5,000-pound device fell toward him, smashing him to the side of the trailer. Two days later, he died of massive blunt force trauma.

In both these cases the employee underestimated the energy stored by a heavy object at rest. When they moved the objects and disrupted their balance, they awakened a giant. The objects were no longer at rest, but in motion. The motion released the energy they contained and they came crashing down on the unwary employees, ending their lives.

The lesson learned here is simple. Don't carelessly or thoughtlessly wake a sleeping giant. A heavy object balanced in a precarious manner can go into motion and become a very hazardous, out of control, monster. Know what you are doing, and understand how to control and avoid the hazards you work with and see every day. A few minutes of pre-planning can avert a lifetime of pain.

*Ernie Miller
Compliance Officer*

Did you know?

If you utilize portable water coolers to supply drinking water to your employees, you should thoroughly clean and disinfect the coolers at the end of each day. Coolers that are not cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis, or which contain stale water provide a perfect breeding ground for bacteria that can result in serious illnesses to employees.

ADOSH Education and Training Calendar

Registration for each class begins no earlier than 30 days prior to the date of the class. Location, address and time of class will be determined at the time of registration. All ADOSH classes are free of charge and are subject to change or cancellation without notice.

October 3	Forklift Train-the-Trainer	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 7	Lockout/Tagout	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 8	Hazard Communication	Yuma	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
October 8	Excavation Safety	Lake Havasu	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
October 9	Scaffold Safety	Lake Havasu	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
October 9	Fall Protection	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 14	Hand and Power Tools	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 14	Respiratory Protection	Peoria	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
October 16	Back Injury Prevention	Camp Verde	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
October 17	OSHA Recordkeeping	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 20	Hazard Communication	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 21	Lockout/Tagout	Avondale	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
October 22	Back Injury Prevention	Phoenix	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
October 22	Electrical Safety Awareness	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 28	Forklift Train-the-Trainer	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
October 29	Noise/Hearing Conservation	Tucson	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
October 30	Scaffold Safety Awareness	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
November 4	Excavation Safety	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
November 5	Confined Space Entry	Yuma	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
November 6	Forklift Train-the-Trainer	Phoenix	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
November 6	Workplace Violence Prevention	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
November 10	Safety Management	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
November 12	Confined Space Entry	Peoria	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
November 13	Welding & Cutting Safety	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
November 13	OSHA in the Medical Office	Avondale	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
November 13	Concrete and Masonry Const.	Prescott	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
November 13	Excavation Safety	Prescott	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
November 17	Construction Crane Safety	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
November 19	Walking/working Surfaces	Lake Havasu	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
November 19	Back Injury Prevention	Lake Havasu	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
November 20	Hazard Communication	Flagstaff	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
November 25	Rigging Safety - Construction	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 2	Forklift Train-the-Trainer	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 5	Suspension Scaffold Safety	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 9	Back Injury Prevention	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 9	OSHA Recordkeeping	Phoenix	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
December 9	Noise/Hearing Conservation	Peoria	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
December 11	Machine Guarding	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 11	Noise/Hearing Conservation	Prescott	Fernando Mendieta	602-542-1640
December 11	Machine Guarding	Yuma	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
December 11	Welding & Flame Cutting	Yuma	Joe Gates	602-542-1641
December 15	Electrical Safety Awareness	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 17	Fall Protection - Construction	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 22	Hazard Communication	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229
December 30	Forklift Train-the-Trainer	Tucson	Glynn Condit	520-320-4229

All Tucson classes will be held at 2675 East Broadway Tucson Az. Please call if you have any questions.

Trainers may also be contacted by e-mail at joe.gates@osha.gov, fernando.mendieta@osha.gov, and glynn.condit@osha.gov

Due to an error in the last issue, here is a reprint of the variance granted concerning scaffold base plates. If you have further questions concerning this or other safety and health issues please feel free to contact one of our consultants: In Phoenix, Albert Bonillas, Babak Emami, Chuck Konitzer, Ken Gaut, Steve Weberman, Toni DiDomenico. In Tucson, Gilbert Bracamonte, Bill Garton, Tom Webb and Carlos Rodriquez.

Variance on Scaffold Base Plates

Last year, Desert Masonry Company submitted a request for permanent variance from the requirements of 29 CFR 1926.451(c)(2). That standard states as follows: "Supported scaffold poles, legs, posts, frames and uprights shall bear on base plates and mud sills or other adequate firm foundation." Desert Masonry requested a variance from these requirements, under certain conditions of use. Those conditions were that the scaffold would be properly erected upon a concrete slab or foundation and that when so erected, the company would utilize a 6" x 6" piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood underneath each scaffold leg, in lieu of a base plate. At its meeting on February 27, 2003, the Commission approved Desert Masonry's request and granted a permanent variance to them, as well as all other similarly situated employers.

Effective immediately, all Arizona employers who properly erect scaffolding on top of a level, concrete slab or foundation may utilize a 6" x 6" piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood underneath each scaffold leg, in lieu of a base plate. Because the concrete provides a firm foundation, no mud sills are required.

This variance is very limited in scope and applies only under the conditions of use noted. Scaffolds erected upon any other surface (other than a concrete slab or foundation) will require the use of base plates at all times. Additionally, mud sills or other firm foundation (i.e., scaffold planks) may also be required, depending upon the type of surface upon which the base plates rest.

**ADOSH
800 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ. 85007**